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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Radio Service OFFICE OF INFORMATION

OMEMAKERS' CHAT SATURDAY, April. 22, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "NEWS NOTES." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations and the ffice of Information, U.S.D.A.

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Every housewife knows how useful borax can be on wash day. But few housewives now that it is also useful as a "spring tonic" for daffodils. That's a recent discovery of plant scientists of the North Carolina Experiment Station and the Federal Department of Agriculture. These experimenting scientists found that 3 pounds of boron--or common borax--mixed with commercial fertilizer and applied at the rate of a thousand pounds an acre stimulated daffodil bulbs to give 10 to 25 percent more blossoms than when no boron was used.

During this 2-year experiment the scientists tried out some 20 different kinds of fertilizer on daffodils. The fertilizers containing boron always resulted in more flowers. The first year an acre of bulbs that averaged 56 thousand blooms without boron gave 65 thousand with boron. The same bulbs replanted the next year gave 70 thousand blooms on a plot treated with boron but only 54 thousand on a plot with no boron. From this the scientists figure that 3 pounds of boron fed to these bulbs for 2 years produced 9 thousand more flowers the first year and another 16 thousand more blossoms the second year.

The scientists explain that boron is one of the chemical elements in the soil that plants need in very small amounts for best growth. During this experiment they tried out traces of magnesium, manganese and copper on daffodils but only boron proved beneficial. They don't advise the home gardener to go out and pour borax on her flower bed, however, because on some plants boron has a harmful effect. They suggest that it is safer to buy bulbs from an experienced nurseryman who has built them up

for blooming on the proper dose of boron.

Speaking of bulbs reminds me of a report from biologists of the Department of Agriculture about the animals that eat bulbs and roots in your garden. "Don't blame the mole if you find something has been nibbling underground in your garden," say th biologists. The ground mole is not so much the criminal as an "accessory before the fact," as lawyers say. The mole simply builds the tunnels that pine mice or field mice use to reach your garden. With the exception of the Townsend mole of the Pacific Coast, moles are "meat-eaters," and live on underground insects, grubs and larva It is the vegetarian mice that enjoy a feast of roots and bulbs.

Because of their eating habits, you can destroy pine mice and meadow mice by poison bait. But such repellents in the mole's tunnel, only cause this animal to dig a new underground passage around the bait. The only way to catch a mole that i ruining your lawn is to trap it. But the biologists do not advise destroying moles unless they are doing damage to your lawn. Otherwise they may be helpful to you by eating insects, grubs and larvae.

So much for news of daffodils, mice and moles. Now here's a little news abou paper. Have you ever guessed how much paper your family uses in a year? Economists of the Forest Service say that the average American family consumes more than half a ton of paper costing about 40 dollars a year. Of the 246 pounds of paper used by th average person annually, about 100 pounds is newspapers, books and writing paper. Th rest is cartons, building boards, wrapping paper and numerous miscellaneous products

The total consumption of paper in the United States in 1937 was nearly 16 million tons, according to census figures. This was more than half the paper produced in the entire world. It is the highest paper figure every reported for any one nation. In the last 15 years the United States has practically doubled the paper it uses.

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Four-fifths of the paper used here is made here in the United States. The rest is imported mostly in the form of newsprint. About 3 million tons of it comes from Canada. In addition to imports of paper, large quantities of pulpwood and wood pulp are brought in and manufactured into paper in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and the Lake States. About half of the wood fiber used in paper in the United States is grown on foreign soil.

The trees that furnish most of the wood fiber are spruce, hemlock and fir. To furnish the paper used in the year 1937, 3 million acres of trees in United States, Canada and northwestern Europe were cut, the foresters estimate.

Here's a last item of news. It's about the search for the perfect peanut. A perfect peanut, according to plant scientists, is one that yields a large number of nuts of good size, flavor and other desirable qualities and also is resistant to disease. This is the kind of peanut plant that scientists at the North Carolina Experiment Station and also Federal plant scientists are seeking. They are strains of Virginia Bunch peanuts that produce good yields and nuts of excellent quality but they are all susceptible to such common diseases as Southern Root Rot and Leaf Spot. Then there are wild varieties that resist disease but have very small nuts. The scientists are trying to cross these strains, combine these desirable qualities and weed out the undersirable ones. In their search for disease resistant varieties they brought in last year more than a hundred new peanut plants from South America and India. Others from China are on the way.

This concludes the news for today.

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